

BEST Educational Network Think Tank VI

Corporate Responsibility for Sustainable Tourism

Stakeholder involvement, culture and accountability in the Blackstone Valley: A work in progress

Authors: Robert D. Billington, Ed. D. and Veronica Cadoppi, MBA.

Institution: Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory - Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Introduction: N/A

Methods: Case study research

Findings: Following its historical rise and fall, America's first industrialized polluted landscape garnered federal and local support to remedy its near destruction. Today, the Blackstone Valley is a thriving, pragmatic example of translating theory into practice. By utilizing the World Tourism Organization (2004), United Nations Environmental Programme & World Tourism Organization (2005), and National Geographic Society (2006) principles, the Blackstone Valley has become a sustainable visitor destination.

The Valley has preserved and enhanced its environment, respected the socio-cultural authenticity of the local communities, and provided economic growth to all stakeholders. Leadership, commitment and social responsibility from all parts of the community have lead the Valley to find its direction, follow its vision and share it with others along the way (Billington & Manheim, 2002).

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council continues to fulfill the vision of sustainable tourism through the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory. The Laboratory's purpose is to introduce the concept of planned sustainable

tourism to local, regional, state, provincial and worldwide tourism leaders and community stakeholders aiming to develop viable and successful destinations.

Application of results: (1) Best practices to be refined or replicated, and (2) Participation in the Sustainable Planning and Development Tourism Laboratory

Conclusions: From America's first industrialized polluted landscape evolves the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory, a transformative learning experience that prepares and encourages key decision makers and shapers to effectively design a sustainable vision for their respective communities. One of the essential outcomes of the Laboratory experience is the creation of a Tourism Development Plan to guide its sustainable tourism efforts.

Through the laboratory and other essential outreach initiatives, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council continues to serve as a catalyst for sustainable tourism supported by community and corporate collective consciousness.

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